

FirstBuild™ to Open at T-Works, India's Largest Makerspace

Global maker community backed by GE Appliances

gives designers, creators and innovators in India a platform to bring big ideas to life

HYDERABAD — Sept. 11, 2018 —GE Appliance's FirstBuild today signed an agreement with the State of Telangana and T-Works to establish FirstBuild India at T-Works. This is in continuation to the agreement signed in December last year where both sides created a task force to work out the details.

This marks the beginning of a new partnership between T-Works, India's largest prototyping centre and makerspace, and [FirstBuild™](#), a global co-creating community backed by [GE Appliances](#), a Haier company. The partnership begins with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in the presence of Sri K.T. Rama Rao, the Honorable Minister for Information Technology for the State of Telangana, and Melanie Cook, Chief Operating Officer for GE Appliances. The MOU, signed by Sujai Karampuri, Chief Executive Officer of [T-Works](#), where FirstBuild will be located, and Chandramouli Vijjhala, Chief Information Officer for GE Appliances India, is aimed at bringing smart products and appliances to market faster through open product innovation that engages India's growing maker community.

FirstBuild has already engaged thousands of makers to invent a new world of appliances. The new location in India further strengthens the FirstBuild community by creating a place for the country's designers, engineers and innovators to develop working prototypes, measure market feasibility, and then build and deliver innovations for the home.

"FirstBuild entities have harnessed community insights and the power of the maker movement to change how products come to market around the world," Cook said. "The new creative center is one of a kind in the Hyderabad region where budding creators will find an open community focused on building a new generation of appliances that transform the home. As the country's largest makerspace, T-Works is the ideal location for FirstBuild India to begin its journey."

The FirstBuild location in India joins other makerspaces in Louisville, Kentucky, which opened in 2014, and in Shanghai, China, which opened in 2017. All locations share a mission to create a socially engaged community of home enthusiasts focused on the next great idea. By letting the community influence the product from the very beginning, FirstBuild quickly delivers products that consumers want.

About T-Works

Stretching over 240,000 square feet with more than \$20 million in facilities and process machinery, T-Works is envisioned as a cornerstone platform in Hyderabad's bid to create a culture of makers, innovators and hobbyists in India. The output of this culture ranges from makers to hardware entrepreneurs to a skilled talent pool, all of which align with the country's 'Make in India' vision. While many accelerators for IT-focused entrepreneurs can be found across the country, open prototyping centers and makerspaces are lacking. The first phase of the T-Works project is under construction and will see 75,000 square feet of space outfitted with sophisticated equipment and supplies for creating prototypes. Inside the facility, FirstBuild India will occupy 8,000 square feet of fabrication space dedicated to developing the appliances for local consumers.

"Creating the culture of hands-on making and building is necessary to fulfill the 'Make in India' vision and to take India into the fourth Industrial Revolution as a leader, not merely as a follower," Sujai said. "The infrastructure that Telangana State is building at T-Works is one

key step in that direction. The partnership with FirstBuild will help the makers productize their innovation by combining their innovative ideas with the manufacturing prowess of GE Appliances' FirstBuild."

Making What Matters

FirstBuild's location in India aims to mirror the success of the centers of excellence in the U.S. and China, in transforming ideas like an [affordable nugget ice maker](#) and [precision cookware for the countertop](#) into actual products consumers love to add to their homes. With the participation of its tens of thousands of online community members, FirstBuild fast-tracks promising appliance concepts by taking the most popular ideas and building products in small batches—thus creating another way GE Appliances is driving a robust product pipeline.

"What's exciting about FirstBuild is the community decides what it wants to make, and it can be anything that creates value for the owner," says Chandramouli Vijjhala, who will spearhead FirstBuild activities in Hyderabad. "We're eager to begin co-creating with the FirstBuild community."

Vijjhala says FirstBuild India will begin operations early next year and will be staffed by associates working alongside designers, programmers, students, craftsman and other makers and doers to not only design, build and sell appliances, but attract and nurture an even stronger community of inspired individuals.